



November 23, 2021

Dear Faculty and Staff,

“It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.”

This quote by author David Steindl-Rast has centered my reflections about the Thanksgiving holiday this week. I suspect that many of us, myself included, often feel that the spirit of thankfulness is a result of joy. But I know that many approach this week’s observance with mixed emotions. The challenges that have faced the people of the University of South Carolina Upstate during the past two years have left joy in short supply for many, and with good reason. Enormous sacrifices have been made. Some have lost loved ones or know someone who has. Financial challenges have been especially hard.

Yet, if we turn that around as the quote suggests, we see and celebrate Thanksgiving in a new light. There is much for which to be grateful. I am grateful to be your Chancellor and to see life at USC Upstate beginning to feel more “normal.” I am grateful for you who make up our accomplished and creative faculty, excellent teachers and researchers who personally invest in the progress and success of students and alumni. I am grateful for the way you inspire your students to work hard and do well. I am grateful for your devotion to the goal to present an education for all that inspires a thriving and just society. I am grateful for our dedicated staff who make this university work and keep us healthy and safe, often augmenting the lessons our students learn through your examples of excellence and personal experience.

I am grateful for the innovative ideas you shared at the REIMAGINE Enrollment Summit that will move this university forward in unprecedented ways. I am grateful that we were able to revive Convocation this fall, celebrate the library’s grand re-opening and launch attractive new programs. I am grateful to have many opportunities to advocate for you and the university as I meet with leaders in the region. Certainly not last or least, I am grateful for my wife, the university’s First Lady, Frankie Harris, and our three wonderful children.

As I pause to think about all for which I am grateful, my heart is filled with joy. I hope you have a grateful and joyful Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennie L. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Bennie L. Harris
Chancellor